

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for negotiating improved terms for a product or service being purchased over the Internet, the method comprising:
 - 5 detecting an issuance of a commitment to purchase with associated terms for said product or service being purchased by a purchaser using an Internet web site;
 - making an offer to said purchaser to accept or reject a contract for negotiating said improved terms within a specified time;
 - 10 if said purchaser accepts said offer:
 - conducting a search for said improved terms within said specified time;
 - receiving said improved terms within said specified time; and
 - executing said contract.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser entering a credit card number, a pre-paid account number, a gift certificate number, an escrow account number, or a bank guaranty number.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser viewing a particular web page.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser accessing a particular URL.
- 25 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser clicking an icon to confirm order.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said making an offer to said purchaser comprises displaying said contract on a screen of a computer system used by said purchaser to purchase said product over the Internet.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein if said purchaser rejects said contract: executing
5 said commitment to purchase.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said commitment to purchase comprises a purchase order for which payment has been guaranteed by said purchaser.

10 9. The method of claim 1, wherein said improved terms comprise a better price, or a better delivery, or a better warranty or a better return policy compared to the terms associated with said commitment to purchase.

15 10. The method of claim 1, wherein making an offer to said purchaser comprises: reading information associated with commitment to purchase; determining if commitment to purchase represents an area of interest for an improved terms service provider; if commitment to purchase represents an area of interest for said improved terms service provider: making said offer to said purchaser.

20 11. The method of claim 1, wherein conducting said search for said improved terms comprises conducting an auction amongst a plurality of suppliers for said product.

25 12. The method of claim 1, wherein executing said contract comprises entering a legal contract with said purchaser to supply said product under said improved terms.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein conducting said search for said improved terms comprises searching a database of preferred suppliers for said product.

14. A system for negotiating improved terms for a product or service being purchased over a computer network, the system comprising:

5 a computer program;

a web site server computer system;

wherein said computer program is executable on a client computer system by a purchaser to connect with the web site server and detect an issuance of a

10 commitment to purchase with associated terms for said product or service; and wherein the web site server is operable to:

receive a notification about said issuance of said commitment to purchase;

make an offer to said purchaser to accept or reject a contract for

15 negotiating improved terms within a specified time; and

in response to said purchaser accepting said offer:

conducting a search for said improved terms within said specified time;

receiving said improved terms within said specified time;

executing said contract.

20 15. The system of claim 14, wherein said computer program is configured to detect the issuance of the commitment to purchase by detecting said purchaser entering a credit card number or a pre-paid account number or a gift certificate number.

25 16. The system of claim 14, wherein said computer program is configured to detect the issuance of the commitment to purchase by detecting said purchaser viewing a particular web page.

17. The system of claim 14, wherein said computer program is configured to detect the issuance of the commitment to purchase by detecting said purchaser accessing a particular URL.

5 18. The system of claim 14, wherein said computer program is configured to detect the issuance of the commitment to purchase by detecting said purchaser clicking an icon to confirm order.

10 19. The system of claim 14, wherein said web site server is configured to make the offer to said purchaser by displaying said contract on a screen of a computer system used by said purchaser to purchase said product over the Internet.

15 20. The system of claim 14, wherein if said purchaser rejects said contract; the computer program is configured to execute said commitment to purchase.

21. The system of claim 14, wherein said commitment to purchase comprises a purchase order for which payment has been guaranteed by said purchaser.

20 22. The system of claim 14, wherein said improved terms comprise one or more of the following: a better price, a better delivery, a better warranty, or a better return policy, as compared to the terms associated with said commitment to purchase.

25 23. The system of claim 14, wherein said web server is configured to make the offer to said purchaser by:
reading information associated with the commitment to purchase;
determining if the commitment to purchase represents an area of business interest for an improved terms service provider; and

if the commitment to purchase represents an area of interest for said improved terms service provider, then making said offer to said purchaser.

24. The system of claim 14, wherein conducting said search for said improved terms
5 comprises conducting an auction amongst a plurality of suppliers for said product or service.

25. The system of claim 14, wherein executing said contract comprises entering a legal contract with said purchaser to supply said product under said improved
10 terms.

26. The system of claim 14, wherein conducting said search for said improved terms comprises searching a database of preferred suppliers for said product.

15 27. The system of claim 14, wherein said client computer system is one or more of the following: a personal computer, a laptop computer, a notebook computer, an Internet-enabled cellular phone, an Internet-enabled personal digital assistant, or an Internet-enabled television.

20 28. A carrier medium comprising program instructions, wherein the program instructions are executable by a computer system to implement the method of claim 1.

29. A method comprising:
25 detecting an action by a purchaser that indicates that the purchaser is about to make an original purchase for a particular item or service over the Internet for a particular price;
offering the purchaser an opportunity to enter into an alternative contract in which the purchaser agrees to wait a predetermined amount of time in exchange

for a possibility of securing a better price for said particular item or service;

searching for said better price for said particular item or service; if said better price is found before said predetermined amount of time expires,

5 purchasing the particular item or service for the purchaser at the better price and charging the purchaser a new price between said particular price and said better price; and

10 if said better price is not found before said predetermined amount of time expires, executing the original purchase for the particular item or service over the Internet for the particular price.

30. The method as recited in claim 29, wherein if said original purchase is not available after said searching is complete, purchasing said particular item for said purchaser at another price and charging the purchaser said particular price.

15 31. The method of claim 29, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser entering a credit card number or a pre-paid account number or a gift certificate number.

20 32. The method of claim 29, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser viewing a particular web page.

25 33. The method of claim 29, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser accessing a particular URL.

34. The method of claim 29, wherein said detecting comprises detecting said purchaser clicking an icon to confirm order.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein said offering said purchaser said opportunity to enter into said alternative contract comprises displaying said alternative contract on a screen of a computer system used by said purchaser to make said original purchase over the Internet.

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36. The method of claim 29, wherein said original purchase comprises a purchase order for which payment has been guaranteed by said purchaser.

37. The method of claim 29, wherein offering said purchaser said opportunity to enter into said alternative contract comprises:

10 reading information associated with said original purchase;
determining if said original purchase represents an area of interest for an alternative contract provider;
15 if said original purchase represents an area of interest for said alternative contract provider:
making said alternative contract to said purchaser.

38. The method of claim 29, wherein searching for said better price comprises conducting an auction amongst a plurality of suppliers for said particular item.

20 39. The method of claim 29, wherein searching for said better price comprises searching a database of preferred suppliers for said particular item.

40. A carrier medium comprising computer program instructions configured to 25 implement the method of claim 29.

41. A method comprising:

detecting an action by a purchaser that indicates that the purchaser is about to
make an original purchase for a particular item or service over the Internet
for a particular price;

5 automatically delaying said purchase for a predetermined amount of time;
searching for a better price for said particular item or service;
if said better price is found before said predetermined amount of time expires,
purchasing the particular item or service for the purchaser at the better
price and charging the purchaser a new price between said particular price
and said better price; and

10 if said better price is not found before said predetermined amount of time expires,
executing the original purchase for the particular item or service over the
Internet for the particular price.

42. A carrier medium comprising computer program instructions configured to
15 implement the method of claim 40.

43. The method of claim 1, wherein executing said contract comprises contacting said
20 purchaser with a confirmation of said product purchase.

44. A method comprising:
detecting an action by a purchaser that indicates that the purchaser is making an
original purchase for a particular item or service over the Internet for a
25 particular price;
accessing a broker-agent web site for seeking a better price for said particular
item or service within a predetermined amount of time;
if said better price is found before said predetermined amount of time expires,
purchasing the particular item or service for the purchaser at the better
price and charging the purchaser a new price between said particular price
and said better price; and

if said better price is not found before said predetermined amount of time expires, executing the original purchase for the particular item over the Internet for the particular price.